

# THE MIXING OF RACES AND SOCIAL DECAY\*

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I HAVE chosen to address you on a subject of great importance. With regard to it strong differences of opinion exist. As we consider various aspects of the subject we grope our way uncertainly.

Let us begin with statements that all will accept.

## Some Facts of Inheritance

First, the various races of mankind interbreed freely with one another. International enmity, racial prejudice, cultural differences all seem, speaking generally, impotent to prevent interbreeding.

Secondly, the extension of world trade and of transport facilities is steadily increasing the mixture of races and in consequence the likelihood of interbreeding.

I add a further statement that is steadily winning acceptance ; physical and psychical qualities are inherited by the same laws of inheritance. As an illustration of this statement we may say that from a tuberculosis parent a tendency to tuberculosis can be inherited ; likewise from a drunken parent a tendency to drunkenness can be inherited. In either case, in mating, the dangerous gene or genes may be rejected, or they may be handed on as recessives ; but, if rejection or subordination does not take place, the evil tendency will show itself when the environment gives it a chance.

What we have to insist upon in addition to the above fundamental facts is that the complex of desirable qualities, or modes of behaviour and of appreciation, which we call civilization, is a recent acquisition of humanity : it may easily be destroyed or, at least, injured. Our civilization is a fragile thing, which can only be preserved by the education of each successive generation.

And the most careful education, painstaking and thorough though it be, at times fails. Such failure is, it seems, especially likely to occur when the type of civilization which the education aims at producing differs markedly from that which may be called ancestral.

## Unsatisfactory "Pockets" in our Society

It is much to be regretted that we lack authoritative knowledge which will enable us to forecast such failure. There is general agreement that in our industrial areas, and in some of our villages, "pockets" of feeble-mindedness exist : the children from families in these pockets are expected by elementary teachers to be—and in fact often are—backward at school. It seems certain that mental dullness is inherited more often than not. But though "pockets" are formed by half-breeds, if we may for convenience so describe children who are the offspring of different racial stocks, and though children from these "pockets" fairly often prove unsatisfactory to their teachers, it is difficult to know how far their defects are due in innate limitations rather than to harmful home influences. As we put the inquiry we sometimes receive over-confident opinions : colour prejudice, which in Britain is instinctive and strong, tends to distort judgment.

There is no doubt that grave social decay often appears in places like seaports where races mix. But we must remember that, when there is no race mixture, if war leads to conditions under which children run wild, or defective housing creates circumstances leading to immorality, even good stocks will tend to decay. The best we can say is that, when conditions improve, recovery can be rapid. But, I repeat, civilization is fragile : it is a pattern of living more easily broken than repaired.

\* The Galton Lecture delivered before the *Eugenics Society* on February 18th, 1949.

### **Intermarriage Between Nordic Races**

Recent experience has certainly shown that interbreeding between different Nordic races does not lead to degeneration. In our country the two world wars produced for a time violent hostility towards the Germans. But so well is it established that interbreeding does not produce harmful results that we hardly ever meet with prejudice against children because one parent is a German. Speaking generally the same statement holds of the mating of all European races. Differences in national and religious tradition make marriages between Britons and members of Latin races somewhat unpopular; and the same is true of marriages with Slavs and with some of the peoples of south-eastern Europe. But from such alliances troublesome or degenerate children are not expected. As regards the Jews, I always remember a saying of my Cambridge tutor—himself partially of Jewish ancestry—"A little Jewish blood is a good thing: too much is a mistake." One can hardly expect the Jews to accept the second part of this statement, which must not be taken too seriously: the first part expresses a widely held opinion.

It is when we pass from European stocks which presumably have had, possibly in neolithic times, common ancestors with ourselves that doubts or prejudices appear.

### **Mating Between Members of Advanced Civilizations**

The world has three great civilizations, Arabian, Indian, Chinese, which have largely arisen independently of our own. How far can interbreeding between members of these civilizations and ourselves be welcomed? This is a most perplexing inquiry. Still more difficult is the question as to interbreeding between members of the four advanced civilizations and those belonging to the more primitive negroid races of Africa.

There is no *a priori* reason why the mating of persons belonging to different advanced civilizations should be harmful. Chinese civilization—and we may regard that of the Japanese as an offshoot—is older than our own and also is probably more stable. Like

every advanced civilization it has its imperfections which, because we are alien to it, we notice with critical eyes. But there is no evidence that, if the best representatives of British and Chinese culture marry, the children are unsatisfactory.

### **Seaport Degradation**

In the seaports of China and of other Eastern countries the offspring of European seamen and Chinese women often form a degraded element in the population: in our own seaports the same is true of the children of Chinese seamen and British women. But many social workers believe that the degradation is not due to racial disharmony: it must rather be regarded as the product of progressive social decay which, given the environment, would show itself were there no racial intermixture.

### **The Formation of Mixed Races**

One would certainly expect that a stable home life would often be lacking when two parents inherit different cultures; and anthropologists seem in general agreement that the social consequences of the mixture of two divergent races originally tend to be disquieting. But, if the process of intermarriage continues, a mixed race will develop in a few generations and in general character will show some measure of permanence. Individuals of this mixed race may tend in Mendelian fashion to revert to ancestral types. But experience seems to show that complete segregation, either physical or psychical, is rare. A new physical type with a corresponding cultural pattern, satisfying to the dominant characters of the mixture, is gradually established. Unless such a mixed culture is markedly inferior to that of the races from which it originates, one cannot conclude that the mixture of different civilizations is to be condemned. If the levels of civilization of the component races are markedly different, one may expect the resulting level to be a sort of mean, inferior to the higher civilisation. The higher race will be acutely sensitive to this taint of blood. But the lower race gains and possibly humanity as a whole profits. We must

remember that in humanity there are no pure races : we are all hybrids.

### **The Creation of "Pure" Stocks**

The so-called pure stocks of history have resulted from the interbreeding of groups isolated from the rest of mankind. If the group be not too large, a few centuries will suffice to produce a definite physical type with a strong and stable pattern of living and thinking. A race developed in this way shows, when its isolation ends, a strength quite out of proportion to its numbers. Whether it will have developed desirable physical and mental qualities will depend on the mutations which have taken place. I need not remind you that, when asked as to the origin of mutations, the wise man remains silent.

The ancient Greeks, intellectually the finest race that earth has so far produced, seem to have been evolved in a few centuries from the interbreeding of members of the decaying Minoan civilization with invaders from the Balkans or further north. Possibly the two races did not differ greatly in their essential make-up. They may have been peoples of a relatively recent common origin of whom the invaded had had the stimulus of Cretan civilization. If such speculations are true, there will have been a parallel to the Norman Conquest when migratory Teutons invaded more sedentary Teutonic stocks in Britain. We cannot deny that in the end the Norman Conquest stimulated the intellectual life of England and probably improved the English stock by diluting the Celtic, or pre-Celtic, strains within it.

### **The Eurasians and their Qualities**

Let us return to modern times, and briefly consider the mixture of races belonging to different modern civilizations. The Eurasians, or Anglo-Indians as they are now commonly called, which are the result of our now-ended rule of India, furnish an example of a mixture of two stable and very different civilizations. It is a mixture which has attained to some measure of stability. Originating, often enough, in alliances which were none too reputable, the Eurasians have

become a respected caste—I do not use the word in a technical sense—in India's varied population. They lack the force of the British, the British capacity for leadership, the British readiness to take risks, and they do not show the outstanding intellectual ability of the best Indians ; but they make excellent clerks, careful, honest and hard-working. We have, in fact, during the last two centuries seen in their development the creation of a mixed race of value to human civilization.

This verdict would be disputed by many—especially army officers and their wives—who have served in India. I believe that the army verdict was often the result of a colour prejudice from which few of us are wholly free.

### **Christian Missionaries and Anglo-Indians**

The most significant sidelight on the problem of racial intermixture in India is probably to be found in the attitude which Christian missionaries from Britain and America have been led to adopt. As is well known, most of them became advocates of Indian independence ; but also a number of the more progressive, those who gave admiration to, and sought the friendship of, men like Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi, advocated intermarriages. Such advocacy, and his reasons for it, are to be found in a book by C. F. Andrews entitled *What I Owe to Christ*. The author, a Fellow of his College at Cambridge, was a close friend of the two men I have mentioned, he had a wide knowledge of political and social affairs and in his time was called—justly, I believe—the best-loved Englishman in India. He was convinced that so long as Christianity was the religion of a race that refused intermarriage with Indians, the spread of Christian principles in India would be retarded. So far as Christian intermarriage has taken place—and I stress the word Christian—the results appear to have been good.

### **Indian Immigration into England**

But, when the particular mixture of races occurs in England, doubts arise. Even in central England there are more Indians than

is generally recognized. They come as university students, as pedlars, as medical men, or in the vague hope of obtaining work. There is in our industrial areas a superstition that it is "lucky" to have an Indian doctor at childbirth and, of course, many Indian doctors are men of ability; they acquire large practices, especially in the poorer quarters of industrial areas. When they marry English women, the marriages appear to be successful, though a return to India and polygamy is an obvious danger.

The Indian pedlars work in industrial areas and surrounding villages. They seem markedly attractive to certain types of English girls and form with them disreputable "pockets" in the areas where they congregate. At times the indignation of the decent people among whom they dwell flares out in riots. If such immigration of low-grade Indians continues with present consequences, we shall see the growth of Anglo-Indian centres of social disorder in many of our large cities. These centres can easily become plague-spots from which moral contamination spreads. It may be that the Christian enthusiasm of teachers and welfare workers will lead slowly to social improvement. But if there is a steady influx of low-grade Eastern immigrants it is hardly likely that wholesome influences will rapidly become effective. With our vast populations it is dangerously easy for individuals and groups to escape the sort of pressure that fashions good citizens.

#### **Alien Immigration and Population Pressure**

The problem of undesirable immigration is world-wide. There will soon be few lands free from this form of population pressure. The population of the world is now some 2,200 millions; it is increasing with dangerous rapidity. Already the amount of fertile land available for food supplies is inadequate: owing to bad husbandry it is diminishing. Naturally, people try to emigrate to regions where food supplies are relatively easy to obtain and where economic opportunities seem to exist. Moreover attempts to prevent such immigration are resented with increasing bitterness; they

can easily give rise to national rancour. So a new cause for war is emerging. Within the last few weeks there have been serious racial riots between Africans and Indians in South Africa. Probably nations and their leaders all over the world are reaching the conclusion that the desire to rule alien lands is a foolish form of megalomania: if this be so, one fruitful cause of war will end. But population pressure may create a far more dangerous cause of conflict. A few centuries hence the voluntary limitation of population increase by the different nations of mankind may prove the most urgent of international needs.

#### **France and Muslim Immigration**

The Muslim faith is sufficiently near to the Christian to make the clash between the Western and the Muslim civilizations at times bitter. The days when Arabian culture was progressive are long distant, though he would be a bold man who prophesied that they would not return. Arab culture is today strong because its faith is militant and also because there is within it absolutely no racial prejudice. For these reasons it has during the present century swept across negroid Africa. Napoleon defended Muslim polygamy because it formed a barrier to colour prejudice. The French links with Algeria—formerly a possession and now an ally of equal status—have brought French and Arab culture into intimate relations. In rural France one finds garrisons of Arab troops. French children of mixed descent are not rare. In parts of Marseilles the mixture of races has created deplorable moral squalor. French people in France seem to be free from our instinctive colour prejudice; but when they live in England they show themselves at times sensitive to the racial mixture that during the present century has proceeded rapidly in their home country. Owing to the fall of the purely French birth-rate, foreign immigration into France has of recent decades been large. Many Italian immigrants have proved good citizens. But, if the population changes of the last half-century continue, a new racial type will gradually be evolved, with far-

reaching political consequences. There are those who say that the disquieting instability of French governments since the fall of Napoleon III is a consequence of a changing racial type.

### **Mixture of Races in South Africa and West Indies**

I have left until the end of my survey the most important and difficult of all aspects of the mixing of races, the problem of the Negro in South Africa and in the U.S.A. In each country the "colour problem" is a domestic political issue of the first magnitude. Dislike of intermarriage and fear of Negro domination show themselves in white attempts at restrictive legislation. Anxiety is greater in South Africa because there the white man is an intruder; and developments in the West Indian islands suggest that ultimately a partially coloured population will be universal. Descendants of Dutch settlers naturally wish to retain a racial heritage of which they are rightly proud. Their civilization is far higher than that of the Negroes among whom they live and distinctly higher than that of the Indians who seek admission as traders. Without Negro labour in the gold mines the industry could not be carried on as at present; and, in fact, climatic conditions make it natural that manual labour should be supplied by the Negro. We have, in fact, a situation which has recurred throughout history. Two races live side by side: the one of higher culture is dominant but increases slowly in numbers: the other becomes increasingly necessary because it supplies manual labour; it has also the higher birth-rate. Inter-breeding takes place and in the end a mixed race with a lower civilization is evolved.

### **The Negro Problem in the U.S.A.**

In the U.S.A., as is well known, the outcome of the Civil War was freedom for the slaves coupled, theoretically, with full civil rights. The actual denial of the franchise in the Southern States has been notorious. Of recent years Negroes have been migrating to the north, where their political

influence is being felt. Such migration is leading to further racial admixture. In thirty American States legislation to prevent marriage between whites and Negroes exists—in one instance a Negro has been defined as one in whom there is more than three-sixteenths of Negro blood. The California Supreme Court has recently declared such legislation unconstitutional. Americans, whether they like the prospect or not, must accept the fact that a Negro strain in the population is spreading. How should this outcome be regarded?

The earlier stages of disreputable intercourse between white and black belong to the past. Coloured people in all but remote areas of the United States of America have acquired a mixture of white blood. Whenever a so-called Negro makes his mark in public life, inquiry almost always shows a mixed ancestry. In fact, the American "Negro" is already of a different race from the African from whom he is partially descended. This fact is probably the cause of the wide divergence of American opinion as to the right attitude towards "black" citizens. Those who live in Southern States where the Negro strain in the coloured population is strong are prejudiced against any form of political or social equality. Those who know the qualities and potentialities of what we may call the "new" Negro have no such prejudice. The "new" Negro is already developing a characteristic culture. His religion is a form of Christianity which, though intellectually primitive, is emotionally strong. For "Negro spirituals" a musician of the quality of Walford Davies had great admiration. Some plays and stories due to "new" Negroes show the beginning of new forms of art.

At the recent Lambeth Conference of 1948 there was a strong delegation of white American bishops. Some were men of outstanding quality, whose insight and judgment marked them out for leadership. I was interested to find that almost invariably in private conversation they spoke well of the way in which the Negroes ("new" Negroes, of course) were developing. There was no extravagant praise: a man of pure European

descent naturally values his white blood. But there was a general belief that, given the right kind of social education and also just economic opportunities, the "new" Negro would prove a good citizen. Their verdict is, I think, that which we ought generally to accept.

### General Conclusions

May I sum up the conclusions that seem to emerge from our survey?

Racial intermixture cannot be avoided. A benevolent despot would prefer not to mix divergent civilizations or cultures. Such mixtures, even if they are not, as often, disreputable in origin, involve that different patterns of living impinge upon one another

to the disadvantage of each. At the beginning racial admixture is usually unsatisfactory: it leads to social decay inasmuch as the impalpable things, such as the religious and moral strength that are of highest value in culture, tend at the outset to disappear. But, if economic conditions become satisfactory, if there are opportunities for social education and, more especially, if pressure towards wholesome living can be brought to bear, the future of a mixed race, as it becomes stable in its make-up, is by no means unpromising.

Whether the mixed races now being fashioned in the world's turmoil will be great in human history, no man can say. Let us not be pessimistic: we are all hybrids.

## DROSOPHILA AND MAN

THE sun that bids them rise and dance  
Death brings at his setting;  
Even so is Man, his brief days spent  
In toil and vain begetting.

His years are but a fruit fly's hour  
Timed by Thy clock Eternity;  
His genes as theirs are but Thy stock  
Patterns for posterity.

Each gene in place; each docketed;  
Since Genesis each species' fate  
Ordained by Thee, while innocent  
The future generations wait.

One shuffle and a life is spun:  
The white fly tipped with purple paint;  
The fly breeds true but infant Man  
May prove a tyrant or a saint,

Whose brood may over-run the earth  
Before it circles once the sun  
By Thy time—mortal time is short  
And fast the generations run.

But Thou canst check them, only Thou  
Knowest that man needs more than skill  
To breed himself as he breeds flies—  
Grant him this wisdom, and the will;

Give him the courage, too, to own  
Vainly he breeds without Thy plan:  
So may he in Thine image grow  
Even towards perfect Man.

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